

PEOPLE - GOMER

(1 of 3)

TAKING *Flight*

Duxbury ballerina taking dreams to London



FRED FIELD photos/The Patriot Ledger

Marissa Gomer of Duxbury has been studying dance since she was 4. Now 18, Marissa has gone to England for an intensive 10-month classical ballet program. Above, she warms up before performing at a private party in Boston for the All Star Game.

Story and photos by
FRED FIELD
The Patriot Ledger

Teen hopes to become professional dancer

In that magical space between leap and landing lies the world of a dancer's dreams. The dance began 14 years ago for 18-year-old Marissa Gomer of Duxbury, and the dream soon followed.

Marissa's determination surfaced early. Enrolled at dance schools from the time she was 4, Marissa began with a mixture of ballet, jazz and tap. By the third grade she decided on ballet exclusively. "You know, that little girl dream of wanting to wear a tutu on stage," she says.

Long hours of practice at Jose Mateo's Ballet Theater of Boston have translated into an intensive 10-month classical ballet program in England. Though Marissa is technically a first-year student, her talent allowed her placement as a third-year student at the prestigious London Studio Centre.

"... that little girl dream of wanting to wear a tutu on stage."

- Marissa Gomer

"It's almost like a graduate year, it's the final year, it's quite tough," says Margaret Barbieri, director of the classical professional option at the school.

Marissa hopes the center will serve as the catalyst toward placement with a professional ballet company in Boston or New York.

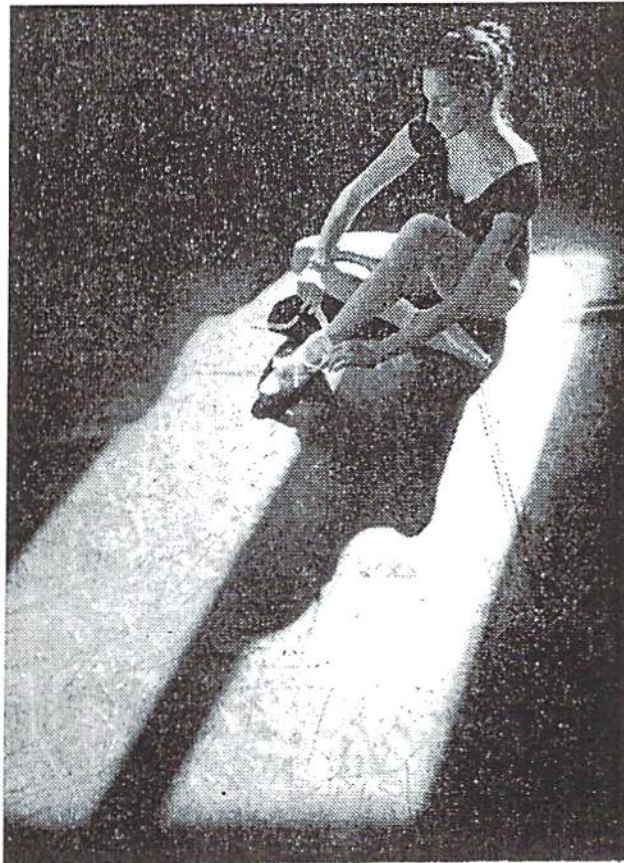
New to London and the rigors of her new school, Marissa admits she misses some things. "I miss my family, and you just kind of want to walk down the street and see Duxbury Pizza or something familiar."

Her only complaint is the weather, "It rains a lot."

Rain or shine, her dream looks bright.



Instructor Jose Mateo works with Gomer in his Cambridge studio.



Sunlight pours in as Gomer laces her slippers before practice.